The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

forming an amorphous semiconductor film over a substrate;

processing a laser beam outputted from [[the]] a laser oscillator in order to shape a beam spot into a linear shape or an elliptical shape on the amorphous semiconductor film[[,]];

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam[[,]];

transmitting the laser beam through an optical system that has a transmittance dependent on a polarization direction of the laser beam[[,]];

deflecting the transmitted laser beam toward the surface to be irradiated[[,]];

shaping the beam spot at arbitrary coordinates on the surface to be irradiated; and

performing laser annealing on the amorphous semiconductor film,

wherein the branching ratio of polarization is changed such that an irradiation energy received by the surface to be irradiated is uniformized.

23. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave solid state laser.

24. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser oscillator is a continuous wave laser selected from the group

consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

25. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 23, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

26. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave Ar laser or a continuous wave Kr laser.

27. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

28. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 25, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

29. (Original) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 26, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

30. (Withdrawn/Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

forming an amorphous semiconductor film over a substrate;

processing a laser beam outputted from [[the]] a laser oscillator in order to shape a beam spot into a linear shape or an elliptical shape on the amorphous semiconductor film[[,]];

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the processed laser beam[[,]];

reflecting the laser beam through an optical system that has a reflectance dependent on a polarization direction of the laser beam[[,]];

deflecting the reflected laser beam toward the surface to be irradiated[[,]];

shaping the beam spot at arbitrary coordinates on the surface to be irradiated; and

performing laser annealing on the amorphous semiconductor film,

wherein the branching ratio of polarization is changed such that an irradiation energy received by the surface to be irradiated is uniformized.

31. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 30, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave solid state laser.

32. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 30, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

33. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 31, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave laser selected from the group consisting of a YAG laser, a YVO_4 laser, a YLF laser, a $YAlO_3$ laser, a Y_2O_3 laser, an alexandrite laser, and a Ti : sapphire laser.

34. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 30, wherein the laser beam is outputted from a continuous wave Ar laser or a continuous wave Kr laser.

35. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 30, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

36. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 31, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

37. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device according to claim 34, wherein the laser oscillator outputs a harmonic wave.

38.-47. (Canceled)

48. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

outputting a laser beam from a laser oscillator;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the laser beam;

passing the laser beam through a first optical system that has a dependence upon a polarization direction of the laser beam;

deflecting the laser beam after passing through the first optical system;

condensing the deflected laser beam toward a semiconductor film by using a second optical system; and

irradiating the semiconductor film with the condensed laser beam.

49. (New) The method according to claim 48 wherein the step of controlling the branching ratio of polarization of the laser beam is performed by using a half-wave plate.

50. (New) The method according to claim 48 wherein the step of deflecting the laser beam is performed by using a galvanometer.

51. (New) The method according to claim 48 wherein the first optical system includes a beam splitter.

52. (New) The method according to claim 48 wherein the second optical system includes a f-θ lens.

53. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

outputting a laser beam from a laser oscillator;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the laser beam;

passing the laser beam through a first optical system that has a dependence upon a polarization direction of the laser beam;

deflecting the laser beam after passing through the first optical system;

condensing the deflected laser beam toward a semiconductor film comprising amorphous silicon by using a second optical system;

irradiating the semiconductor film with the condensed laser beam to crystallize the semiconductor film; and

patterning the crystallized semiconductor film to form an active layer of a thin film transistor.

54. (New) The method according to claim 53 wherein the step of controlling the branching ratio of polarization of the laser beam is performed by using a half-wave plate.

55. (New) The method according to claim 53 wherein the step of deflecting the laser beam is performed by using a galvanometer.

56. (New) The method according to claim 53 wherein the first optical system includes a beam splitter.

57. (New) The method according to claim 53 wherein the second optical system includes a f-θ lens.

58. (New) A method of manufacturing a semiconductor device, comprising the steps of:

outputting a laser beam from a laser oscillator;

passing the laser beam through a half-wave plate;

controlling a branching ratio of polarization of the laser beam by rotating the half-wave plate;

passing the laser beam through a first optical system that has a dependence upon a polarization direction of the laser beam;

deflecting the laser beam after passing through the first optical system;

condensing the deflected laser beam toward a semiconductor film by using a second optical system; and

irradiating the semiconductor film with the condensed laser beam.

59. (New) The method according to claim 58 wherein the step of deflecting the laser beam is performed by using a galvanometer.

60. (New) The method according to claim 58 wherein the first optical system includes a beam splitter.